



[Home](#) > [Statistics](#) > [Understanding statistics](#) > [Guide to labour statistics](#) > [Industry employment guide](#)

Industry employment guide

Guide to labour statistics

Learn about our different industry employment measures and how to use them

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Sections

▼ [Guide to labour statistics](#)

[Labour statistics recent and upcoming developments](#)

[About labour statistics](#)

▶ [Earnings guide](#)

▶ [Gender pay gap guide](#)

[Industry employment guide](#)

On this page

[Overview](#)

[Our best source of industry information](#)

[Short term changes](#)

[Regional data](#)

[I'm looking for industry employment by...](#)

[Data and resources available](#)

[Regional labour market data guide](#)

Close

Feedback

Overview

We produce a range of industry employment statistics to provide different insights. It can be challenging to choose which data to use. This page will help you understand what industry employment data are available, where to find them and how they are best used.

The [Employment \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/concepts-and-sources/employment\)](#) and [Jobs \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/concepts-and-sources/jobs\)](#) chapters of Labour Statistics: Concepts Sources and Methods have more information on employment and jobs related concepts and how we produce the data.

Our best source of industry information

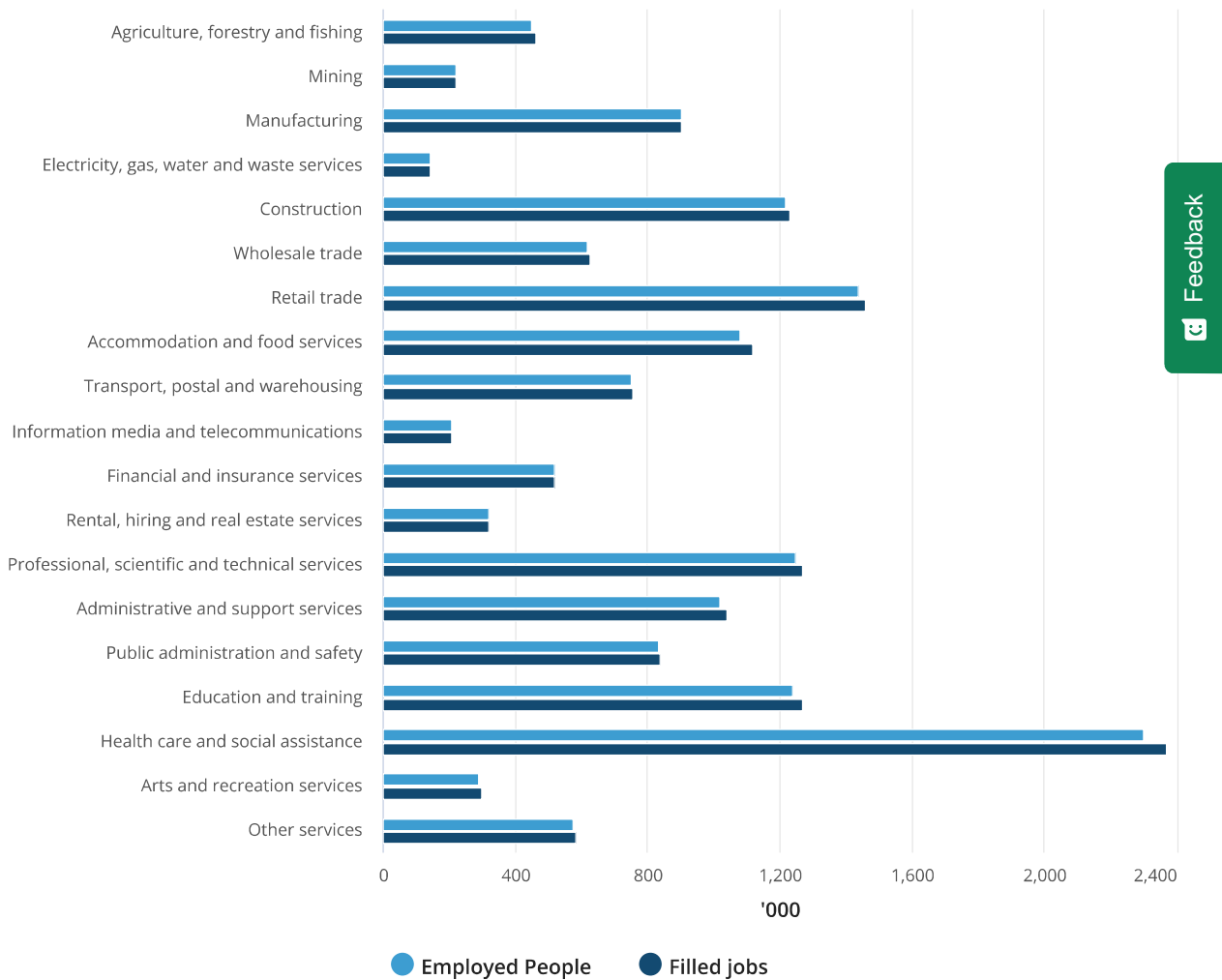
The [Labour Account \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release\)](#) measures jobs, employed people, hours, and income in Australia. It uses the best available labour market data to create our most

comprehensive source of information. A full list of data sources used is available in the [Labour Account \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account\)](#) chapter of the Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods.

The key data source for Labour Account employment is the [Labour Force Survey \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#) (LFS), which provides robust estimates of employment and unemployment. It is then combined with unpublished [Quarterly Business Indicator Survey \(/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-indicators-australia/latest-release\)](#) (QBIS) data which provides higher quality industry of employment distribution estimates than LFS. This is explored more in 'Assigning Industry' below.

Use the Labour Account for analysis of employment (or employed people) and jobs by industry division and subdivision over time.

Employed people and filled jobs by industry, December quarter 2023 (Seasonally adjusted)



Source: [Labour Account Australia, December 2023 \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/dec-2023\)](#)

Differences between the Labour Account and the Labour Force Survey

Labour Force Survey (LFS) industry data is released earlier than Labour Account industry data (as the Labour Account relies on a range of data sources). While the LFS data may provide some useful early insights, the Labour Account data is our definitive read on industry employment and jobs levels and changes over time. The LFS industry data provides important context for other LFS data, however collecting industry information from a household survey has limitations and these estimates may not provide the best indication of real-world levels or changes.

There are also some key differences in how the Labour Account and LFS industry employment estimates are produced. The Labour Account includes estimates of the number of people and jobs in each industry, whereas LFS only includes estimates of the number of employed people in each industry, based on their main job.

Assigning Industry

The LFS assigns industry according to a person's description of their main job. For example, a sales assistant works at a small store selling stationery at the front of a warehouse. Their customers are members of the public, however their employer makes most of its profits through wholesale contracts supplying stationery to a department store chain. Based on the sales assistant's description of their job, they would be assigned to the Retail trade industry in the LFS.

The Labour Account uses the economic activity of the employer to determine industry, so the sales assistant's job will be counted in the Wholesale trade industry. This is also where their contribution to production would be reflected in the National Accounts.

Multiple job holders

An employed person can have more than one job, so there will always be more filled jobs than employed people in Australia. We refer to employed people with more than one job as multiple job holders.

The LFS only collects an employed person's industry of main job, even if that person is a multiple job holder. As a result, the LFS industry estimates only reflect the number of people employed in each industry in their main job. For example, Alex works 5 days a week as a barista in a café and has a second job stacking shelves at a supermarket on Tuesday nights. In the LFS industry employment estimates, Alex will be counted as one employed person in the Accommodation and food services industry as their main job is as a barista.

The Labour Account industry employment estimates count everyone working a job in each industry regardless of whether it is their main job or a secondary job. This provides estimates of the total number of people employed in each industry. Alex will be counted as an employed person in both the Accommodation and food services and Retail trade industries, although they will only be counted as one employed person at the Australia level.

For more information, see [Labour Account: Person Quadrant \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account/persons-quadrant\)](https://statistics.detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/australian-labour-account/persons-quadrant) in Labour Statistics: Concepts Sources and Methods.

Scope

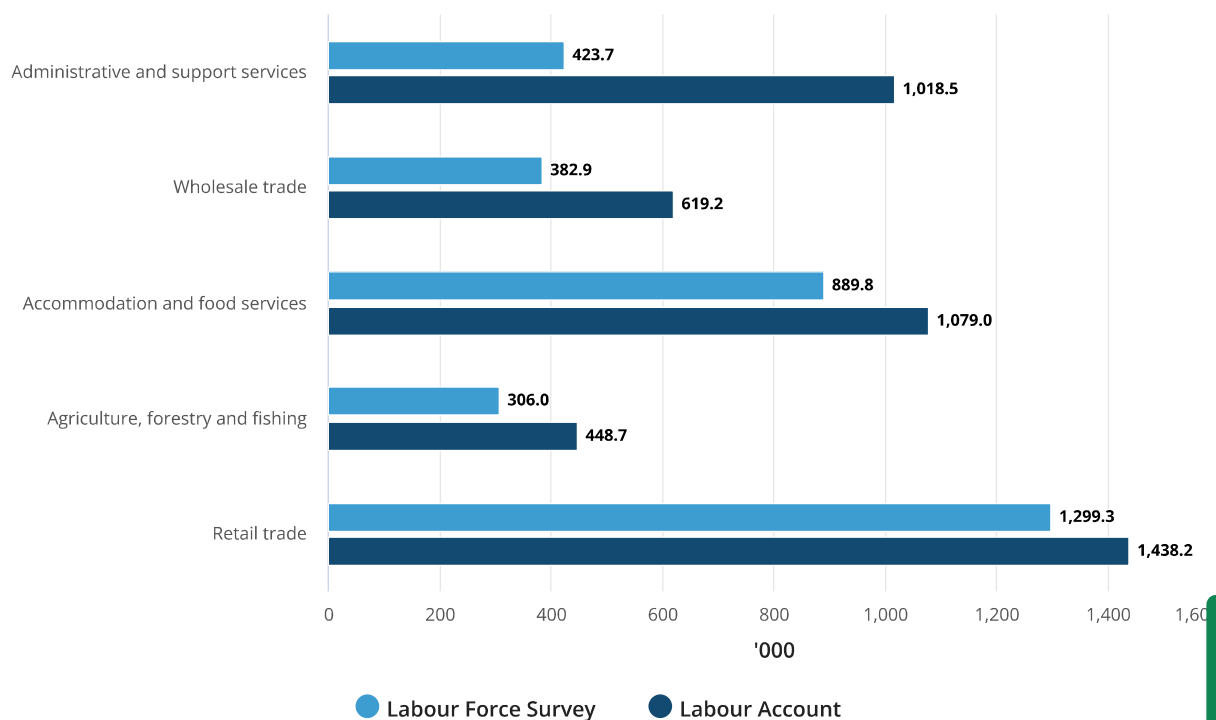
The Labour Account industry estimates include three groups of workers who are outside of the scope of the LFS. These are child workers (employed children aged 5-14), employed short-term non-residents and permanent defence force personnel.

Reference period

The reference periods of the LFS and Labour Account can also affect comparisons. LFS industry employment data is collected in the mid-month of every quarter (February, May, August and November). The Labour Account people and jobs estimates, including for industry of employment, are as at the end of the last month in the quarter (March, June, September and December). Differences in the reference periods can cause some variation between the published estimates.

Industries with the largest differences in employed people between the LFS and Labour Account are shown in the graph below.

Employed people by selected industries, December quarter 2023 (Seasonally adjusted)



Source: [Labour Account Australia, December 2023 \(/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/dec-2023\)](#) and [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/nov-2023\)](#).

The large difference in Administrative and support services is mostly due to the different ways industry is assigned for labour hire workers. In the LFS, people who work for a labour hire firm are likely to incorrectly identify their employer and the activity undertaken at their workplace as the business they are providing labour to (rather than who they are actually employed and paid by - the labour hire firm). In the Labour Account, labour hire workers are assigned to the Administrative and support services industry, as reported by their employer.

Short term changes

[Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages \(/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release\)](#) was first released in April 2020. The estimates use Single Touch Payroll (STP) data from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) to measure changes in jobs paid and reported through STP (payroll jobs) each week. This is the first time we've been able to see week-to-week changes across all industries in the labour market. The name of this release changed to Weekly Payroll Jobs in August 2023, reflecting the removal of wages indexes given the availability of new earnings statistics in the [Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator \(/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/monthly-employee-earnings-indicator/latest-release\)](#).

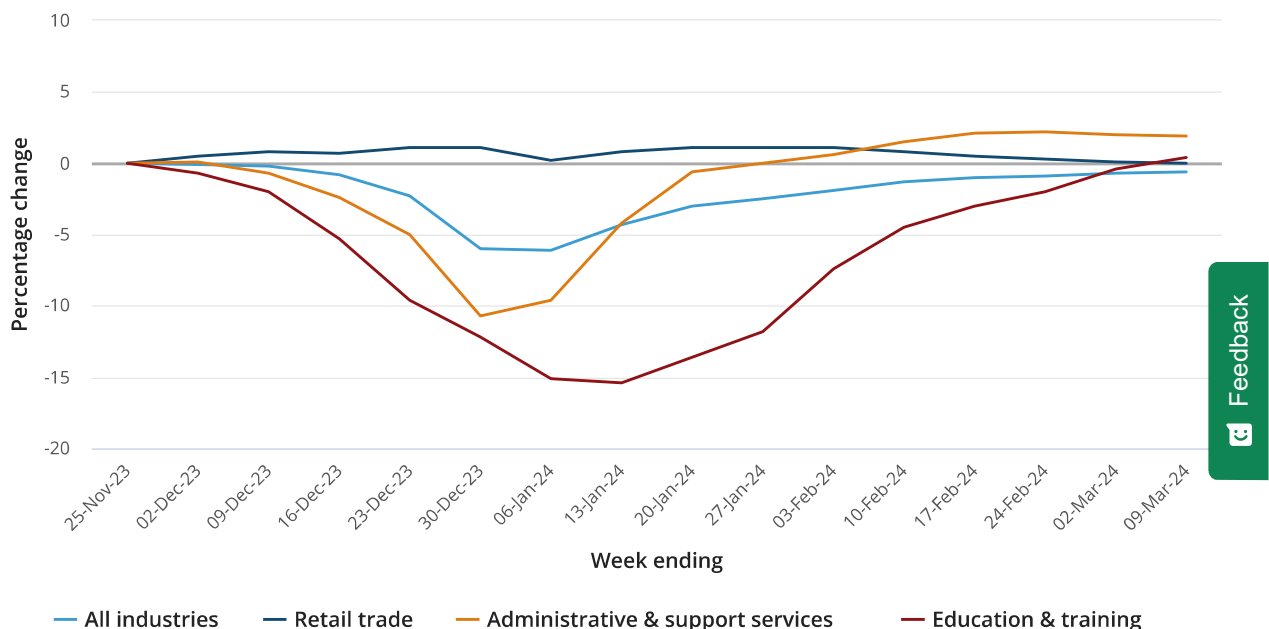
Use Weekly Payroll Jobs to analyse short term changes in industry employment, and as an early indicator to other labour releases.

Example: Measuring industry employment at year-end

The period before Christmas sees an increase in labour market activity, followed by lower business activity around public and school holidays, and employees taking annual leave over the year-end period. The size of these changes differ between industries.

Retail trade maintains the level of payroll jobs through December then drops at the end of the month after pre-Christmas trading. Education and training starts to decrease from the start of school holidays, then increases steadily until school returns in February.

Change in payroll jobs in late 2023 and early 2024 (Original)



Source: [Weekly Payroll Jobs, week ending 16 March 2024 \(/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/week-ending-16-march-2024\)](https://statistics.gov.au/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/week-ending-16-march-2024).

Regional data

[Jobs in Australia \(/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release\)](https://statistics.gov.au/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release) provides industry of employment data by age, sex, employment size and more than 2,200 regions. The statistics are derived from the [Linked Employer Employee Dataset \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/administrative-data/linked-employer-employee-dataset-leed\)](https://statistics.gov.au/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/administrative-data/linked-employer-employee-dataset-leed) (LEED), which brings together personal income tax and business data.

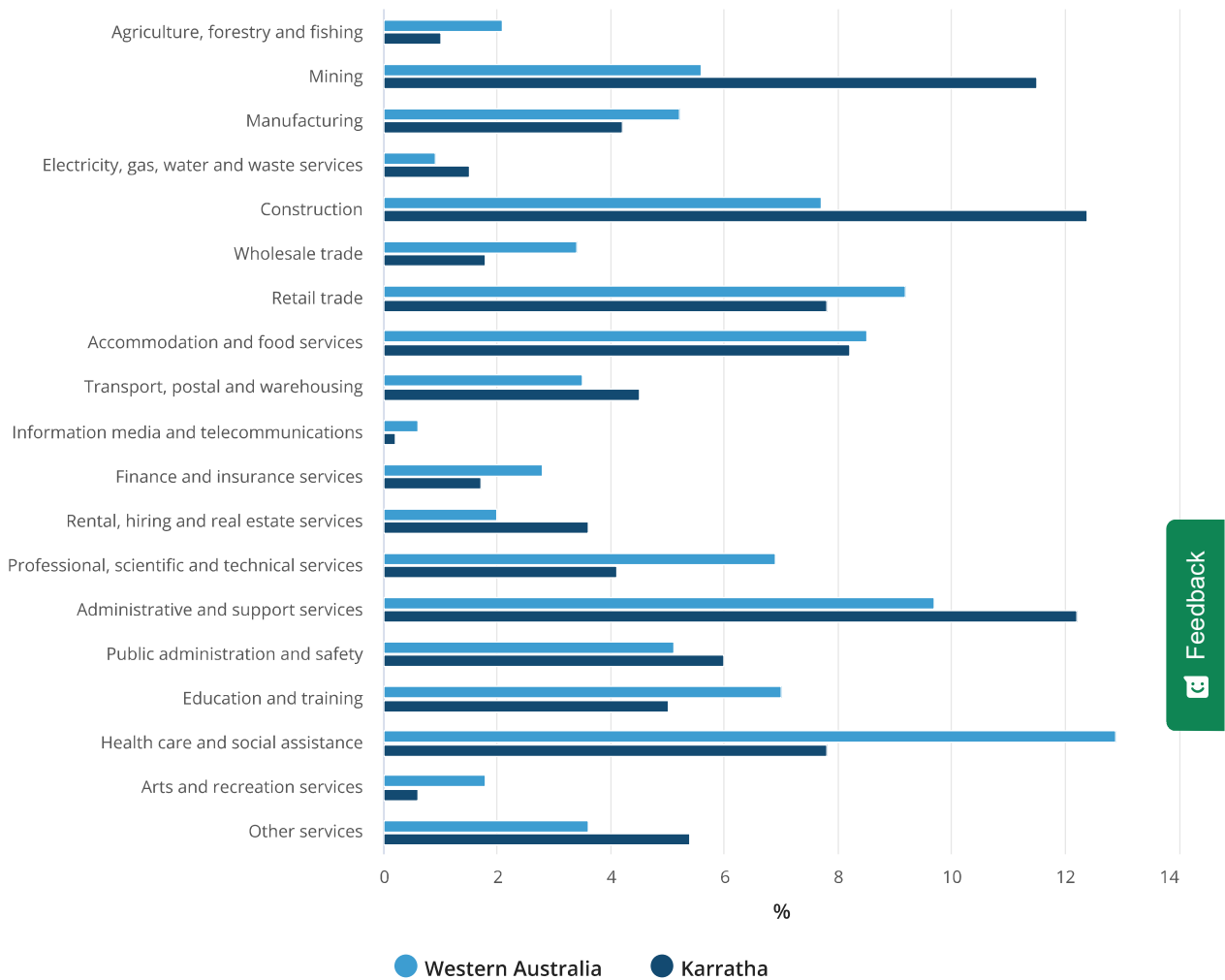
Use Jobs in Australia for detailed analysis of employment and jobs, particularly by region. You can create your own customised tables using [Microdata and TableBuilder: Jobs and Income of Employed Persons \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/jobs-australia\)](https://statistics.gov.au/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/jobs-australia).

Example: Comparing industry employment by region

In Western Australia (and at a national level), the industries with the most jobs are Healthcare and social assistance,

Administrative and support services and Retail trade. By comparison, in Karratha the industries with the most jobs are Administrative and support services, Construction and Mining. This reflects the strong influence of mining-related activities in the surrounding Pilbara region on the local labour market.

Industry distribution of jobs, Western Australia and Karratha, 2020-21 (Original)



Source: [Jobs in Australia, 2020-21 \(/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/2020-21-financial-year\)](#).

I'm looking for industry employment by...

This table summarises the most relevant industry employment data sources by topic. The quality of industry data has been prioritised when assigning ratings.

Some of these data sources have extra topics available through their TableBuilder and microdata products. We produce additional data sources which also include industry employment statistics on these topics not included below (for example, estimates from our Labour Force supplementary surveys).

Topics available by data source (a)(b)

	LA	EEH	JIA	WPJ	PSEE	AIS	LFS	Census
Employer characteristics								
Industry subdivision	✓	✓	■	■		■	■	■
Sector	✓	■	■	■ (c)	■ (d)	■ (c)	■	■
Person characteristics								
Sex		✓	✓	■		■	■	■
Age groups		✓	✓	■			■	■
State/territory		✓	✓	■	■	■	■	■
Region			✓				■	■
Education							■	■
Job characteristics								
Part-time and full-time		■					✓	
Employment arrangement		■	■				✓	
Pay setting method		✓						

✓ Recommended for this topic in relation to industry data.

■ Published for this topic in relation to industry data however some [limitations \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/concepts-and-sources/earnings#abs-data-sources\)](/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/concepts-and-sources/earnings#abs-data-sources) should be noted.

■ Available for this topic upon request or via TableBuilder and microdata products.

a. Ratings provide guidance on the relative quality of the different sources. Business sources generally provide more accurately reported industry employment data than household sources and are recommended for each topic where available.

b. Acronyms used in table are: Labour Account (LA), Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH), Jobs in Australia (JIA), Weekly Payroll Jobs (WPJ), Public Sector Employment and Earnings (PSEE), Australian Industry (AIS) and Labour Force Survey (LFS).

c. Private sector only.

d. Public sector only.

Data and resources available

This section summarises the industry employment data available according to their key features. It also lists other information available to help you understand industry employment data.

Industry employment data sources

We produce many data sources measuring industry employment. The most relevant data sources are included below.

ABS industry employment data sources

Release	Pillar	Frequency	Description
Labour Account (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release)	Accounts	Quarterly	Best source of industry employment data. Key information on jobs, people, income and hours by industry.
Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release)	Business survey	Two yearly	Earnings and hours worked by employee for each industry. For customised or detailed data analysis, use Microdata and TableBuilder: Employee Earnings and Hours (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia) .
Jobs in Australia (/statistics/labour/jobs/jobs-australia/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Filled jobs estimates for more than 2,200 regions, including industry, age, sex and occupation data, based on Personal Income Tax data. More detailed data available through Microdata and TableBuilder: Jobs and Income of Employed Persons (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/jobs-australia) .
Weekly Payroll Jobs (/statistics/labour/jobs/weekly-payroll-jobs/latest-release)	Admin data	Monthly	Weekly estimates of payroll jobs indexes including percentage change movement, based on Single Touch Payroll data.
Public Sector Employment and Earnings (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release)	Admin data	Annual	Public sector estimates by state/territory, and level of government.
Australian Industry (/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/latest-release)	Business survey	Annual	Information on employment, earnings, and labour costs by industry and business characteristics.
Labour Force Survey, Detailed (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release)	Household survey	Monthly	Headline estimates of employment, unemployment, and hours worked. There is also detailed data available in Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia) .
Census (/census/find-census-data)	Household survey	Five yearly	Industry, occupation, income, geographic and demographic data for every Australian resident. Detailed data products (/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/census-population-and-housing) can be used for customised tables and analysis.

Other information

- [Employment and unemployment statistics \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment)
- [Jobs statistics \(/statistics/labour/jobs\)](/statistics/labour/jobs)
- [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release\)](/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/latest-release)
- [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\) \(/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-industrial-classification-anzsic/latest-release\)](/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-industrial-classification-anzsic/latest-release)